

Multi-dimensional Poverty among the Persons with Disability in India

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Disability and poverty are strongly associated with each other especially in the developing economies where 80 per cent of the total disabled persons of the world live. Most of the studies agree that poverty is a cause as well as consequence of disability. Although there are several constitutional provisions in India which ensure the equal treatment to the people with disability but people with disability are generally disabled through unequal treatment and denial of basic rights by the broader society. The voiceless disabled people are inseparable part of India's growing population of marginal, weaker and vulnerable sections of society. Due to lack of supporting infrastructure and huge informal sector, the employers generally deny employment to the people with disability and if a person who is already employed meets a disability due to some accident or illness, the private employers generally force him/her to resign. Since there is no social security mechanism for these people and the transport system is hardly equipped with the facilities required for the disabled persons, they find it hard to move around without help of a family member. As a result, they are generally devoid of education as well as employment. So, disabled people in India are not only among the poorest of the poor in the country, but that they remain poor for very long periods of time, from generation to generation. This exclusion and marginalization of disabled persons through reducing their opportunities to contribute productively to the household and to the community, further leads to increase the risk of poverty. Thus, in absence of the supportive infrastructure, the persons with disabilities experience lower educational attainments, lower employment and higher unemployment rates, worse living conditions, and higher poverty rates. Since poverty is a complex phenomenon and includes many deprivations, therefore this study aims to explore the poverty rates among the persons with disability through uni-dimensional as well as multi-dimensional approach. Hence, it includes both monetary (income/consumption expenditure) and non-monetary aspects of living standard and poverty (for example, education, health, living conditions and employment status). For this purpose, the methodology suggested by Alkire and Foster (2011) has been used. Through this methodology, we are not only able to capture the head count ratio, the squared poverty gap as well as severity of poverty on various dimensions but it also helps us to calculate the relative contribution of each dimension in overall poverty rate of the disabled persons. This helps us to give policy suggestions regarding the individual dimensions. This also enables us to calculate the extent to which a rupee (monetary unit) spent on the well being of disabled persons can reduce the poverty rates among them. This study uses the data provided by National Sample Survey

Organisation (NSSO) of India (two Rounds i.e. 2002 and 2011) along with the latest Socio-Economic and Caste Census of India (2011).

This study points out that most of the disabled persons are concentrated at lower deciles of income, lower level of educational attainments as well as low paid, insecure economic activities (most of them are own account home-based workers indicating that fewer of them are employed by others). More than 90 per cent of them are deprived on six out of eight dimensions included in this study. However, the relative contribution of education, employment status and social security provisions are higher than other dimensions. Hence, this study emphasises the equal treatment to the disabled persons in availing educational as well as employment opportunities. Providing social security to them can also help in poverty reduction among the persons with disabilities.